

§ 3407.9 Use of environmental documents in decisionmaking.

In carrying out agency responsibilities under NEPA, CSREES officials shall:

(a) Consider all relevant environmental documents in evaluating programs, proposals, or projects for final agency action.

(b) Make all relevant final environmental documents, comments, and responses part of the record in rule-making and adjudicatory proceedings.

(c) Ensure that all relevant final environmental documents, comments, and responses are submitted to CSREES in a timely fashion, are subjected to normal agency review processes, and are made a part of the official record.

(d) Consider only those alternatives encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental documents when evaluating plans, programs, or proposals for agency action.

§ 3407.10 Preparation of environmental assessments.

(a) *Format and content.* An EA may be prepared in any format provided that it covers, in a logical and succinct fashion, the information necessary for determining whether a proposed CSREES action may have a significant environmental impact and thus warrant preparation of an EIS. The information must include brief discussions on the need for the project, alternatives to the proposed action, environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, and a listing of agencies and persons consulted (40 CFR 1508.9). Where possible, EAs should be limited to 10–15 pages. NOTE: It is the scope and complexity of the environmental issues, rather than the size of the project, that should be used to determine the length of the EA.

(b) *Supplements to environmental assessments.* Where substantial changes occur in a project or activity for which an EA has been prepared and it is determined by a responsible CSREES official specified in § 3407.4(b) that the changes are pertinent to environmental concerns, a supplement to the EA may be required. Supplements to EAs shall be evaluated and processed

as stated in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) *Decision notice.* Upon completion of an EA and any supplement thereto, the responsible CSREES official will evaluate the information it contains, determine whether an EIS is required or whether no significant environmental impact is likely to occur, and will document the decision and the reasons upon which it is based (40 CFR 1508.13). The EA shall be available to the public.

§ 3407.11 Preparation of environmental impact statements.

(a) *Actions involving more than one agency.* If more than one Federal agency participates in a program activity, a lead agency shall be selected in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.5(c). The lead agency, in full cooperation with all participating agencies, shall assume responsibility for involving the public as required in 40 CFR 1501.4(b) and shall prepare the EIS or shall cause the EIS to be prepared as provided in 40 CFR 1501.5.

(b) *Notice of intent.* If a responsible CSREES official designated in § 3407.4(b) of this part recommends the preparation of an EIS, the public shall be apprised of the decision. This notice shall be prepared according to 40 CFR 1508.2.

(c) *Draft and Final EIS.* The process of preparing the draft and final EIS, as well as the format of the document, shall comply with the provisions of 40 CFR parts 1502–1506.

(d) *Supplemental statements.* Where substantial changes occur or new information becomes available under a project or activity for which an EIS or draft EIS has been prepared and it is determined by a responsible CSREES official specified in § 3407.4(b) that the changes are pertinent to environmental concerns, a supplement to the EIS or draft EIS may be required. The supplement shall be evaluated and processed in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.9(c).

(e) *Decisionmaking and implementation.* A responsible CSREES official designated in § 3407.4(b) may make a decision no sooner than thirty days after the notice of availability of the final EIS has been published in the FEDERAL

REGISTER by the Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR 1506.10). The decision will be documented in a record of decision as required by 40 CFR 1505.2, and monitoring and mitigation activities will be implemented as required by 40 CFR 1505.3.

PART 3411—NATIONAL RESEARCH INITIATIVE COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: Sec. 2(i) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i(i)).

SOURCE: 56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 60 FR 63368, Dec. 8, 1995.

Subpart A—General

§ 3411.1 Applicability of regulations.

(a) The regulations of this part apply to competitive research grants awarded under the authority of section 2(b) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended by section 1615 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (FACT Act), (7 U.S.C. 450i(b)), for the support of research to further the programs of the Department of Agriculture and to improve research capabilities in the agricultural, food, and environmental sciences in the following categories: Single investigators or coinvestigators in the same disciplines; teams of researchers from dif-

ferent disciplines; multidisciplinary teams for long-term applied research problems; multidisciplinary teams whose research has the eventual goal of technology transfer; institutions for improvement of research, development, technology transfer and education capacity through the acquisition of special research equipment and improvement of teaching and education, including fellowships; single investigators or coinvestigators who are beginning their research careers; and, faculty of small and mid-sized institutions not previously successful in obtaining competitive grants under this subsection. The National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRICGP) Board of Directors was established by the Assistant Secretary for Science and Education to advise the Assistant Secretary on policy issues concerning NRICGP. The Board is comprised of the Assistant Secretary for Science and Education; the Administrators of the Cooperative State Research Service, the Agricultural Research Service, the Extension Service, and the Economic Research Service; the Deputy Chief for Research of the Forest Service; the Chief Scientist of the NRICGP; and the Director of the National Agricultural Library. Any determinations made by the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences, including recommendations made by the Agricultural Science and Technology Review Board, and the National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board, will be taken into consideration by the Board in recommending policies and priorities for the NRICGP. The advice of other individuals is also encouraged; that advice also is provided to the Board of Directors. The Administrator of CSRS shall determine and announce, through publication of a Notice in such publications as the FEDERAL REGISTER, professional trade journals, agency or program handbooks, the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, or any other appropriate means, high-priority research areas and categories to improve research capabilities for which proposals will be solicited and the extent that funds are available therefor.